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REMARKS

Claims 1 and 13 are amended. Claims 1-23, as amended, remain in the application. No new matter is added by the amendments to the claims.

The Rejections:

In the Office Action dated September 16, 2005, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-6, 10, and 13-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by St. Germain. The Examiner stated that St. Germain teaches a synthetic fiber rope assembly (Figure 1) comprising at least two ropes (Figure 5; details 7, 8) each formed of synthetic fiber strands (Column 2, lines 63-65) and extending generally parallel in a lengthwise direction at a predetermined distance from each other, a dumbbell shaped rope sheathing (Figure 5; detail 5) forming a fixed link between said at least two ropes, and at least one reinforcement element (10) attached as an integral component of the rope sheathing (9), having an oblong shape and extending in a lengthwise direction, enveloping the rope sheathing in a tubular form, and exposed at an outer surface of the rope assembly for mechanically reinforcement, wherein the reinforcement element overlaps itself in the lengthwise direction (Figure 1 shows the cord overlaps itself at the end; likewise, the sheath/reinforcement element extend the length of the rope assembly, in the shape of an oblong tube). In regards to improving a transverse resistance of the at least two ropes, the Examiner stated that the reinforcement element would inherently improve transverse resistance by its very presence.

The Examiner rejected Claims 8, 9, 11, and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over St. Germain in view of Schuerch (4534163). The Examiner stated that St. Germain essentially teaches the invention as discussed above, but fails to specifically teach the different types of sheaths capable of being used to protect the ropes. According to the Examiner, Schuerch teaches that braided sheaths are well known as a source of protection to inner rope structures and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to utilize a braided sheath as taught by Schuerch, so as to provide protection in a more efficient manner. The Examiner commented that a braid is able to conform to the shape of the core within it, enabling the sheath to more exactly cover the core without slack and the ordinarily skilled artisan would have appreciated this and known to use the sheath as taught by Schuerch. The Examiner stated that, likewise, Schuerch teaches that materials such as nylons

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and other plastics may be used as outer coverings and the ordinarily skilled artisan would have understood this teaching and known that a well known plastic such as polyester would provide the necessary strength and protective qualities required of the braid, and as a result would have utilized a polyester in the braid of the invention. In regards to woven mats and meandering loops, the Examiner commented that all are well known fabric structures, and the ordinarily skilled artisan would have known how and when to utilize each, depending on the specific assembly desired.

In response to Applicants' previously filed arguments, it is the Examiner's opinion that any reinforcement member will improve transverse resistance over no reinforcement member at all. While St. Germain may not specifically state that his improves transverse resistance, the Examiner's opinion is that this is an inherent property of the presence of a reinforcement member.

The Examiner identified Claims 7 and 12 as objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Cited References:

The St. Germain patent shows a roundsling wherein load bearing aramid strands 7 and 8 are covered in a loose single (5) or double protective envelope (5, 10) fastened by longitudinal stitching (col. 5, lines 17- 33). As shown in Figs. 4 and 5, the strands 7 and 8 are not attached to the protective envelope (5, 10).

The Response:

Applicants appreciate the allowance of Claims 22 and 23.

Applicants amended Claims 1 and 13 to further define the rope sheathing as fixing the ropes relative to each other in a firm torsional manner. This amendment is supported on page 4 of the specification at lines 27-30.

As stated above, the Examiner identified the St. Germain dumbbell shaped rope sheathing (Figure 5; detail 5) as forming a fixed link between said at least two ropes, and characterized the

envelope (10) as being a reinforcement element attached as an integral component of the rope sheathing.

The loose double protective envelope (5, 10) shown in the St. Germain patent does not fix the ropes (7, 8) relative to each other in a firm torsional manner as defined by Applicants' amended Claims 1 and 13. As can be seen in Figs. 4 and 5 of St. Germain, the strands 7 and 8 are free to move relative to each other inside the inner cover 5 and are not held in a fixed position relative to each other. Confirmation that there is no attachment between the strands 7 and 8 and the cover 5 is found starting at line 50 in column 5 and ending at line 5 in column 6 wherein it is stated that the tubular cover is pulled over the loops of strands during assembly.

Schuerch shows a similar construction wherein the core of filaments is free to move within the jacket of ribbons and the outer plastic sheath.

Applicants believe that amended Claims 1-21 are not anticipated by St. Germain and are not rendered obvious by St. Germain in view of Schuerch.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above arguments, Applicants believe that the claims of record now define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.